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— SOME PHASES OF —  
**SASKATCHEWAN'S  
SCHOOL PROBLEM**

**FACTS vs. FICTION**

**AN APPEAL TO REASON  
AND COMMON SENSE**

**DON'T BE FOOLED!**

Remember that in 1911 the Conservative  
Party Defeated Reciprocity by Playing  
upon the Feelings and Prejudices of  
the Electors

**THE LIBERAL PARTY**

**Stands for Better Schools  
and Sound Educational Policies**

Issued from

**The Central Office of the Provincial Liberal Party**





HON. W. M. MARTIN  
Premier and Minister of Education

## BETTER SCHOOLS.

The "Better Schools" movement was started by Hon. Walter Scott and not by the Conservative party. It was set in motion by the Liberal Government because it believed our elementary school system could be improved in several important directions. While our educational system, taken as a whole, is satisfactory, it is not perfect. No system is. Liberals recognise this as much, or even more, than Conservatives, and throughout the whole province Liberalism stands prepared to assist the Government in this important work to the fullest extent.

## CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL TRICKS.

The Conservative party of Saskatchewan is at its old tricks. When the "Better Schools Movement" was launched a clear understanding was reached in the Legislature between the leaders of the two political parties that the question would be kept out of politics. It was universally recognised that if the best results were to be secured every effort should be made to obtain the heartiest co-operation of all parties, all organisations, all nationalities and all creeds. The same view was held by the Saskatchewan Education League, which represents all classes in the community.

But what do we find today! The Conservative party, through its leaders, its political agents, and its press are endeavouring in every conceivable manner to arouse the passions and prejudices of the electors. They are endeavouring to stir up the worst feelings in man's nature. In these troublesome times when all should be united they are striving to divide our people into hostile camps. And all for what purpose? Simply to try and catch votes. Nothing more and nothing less.

## THE LESSON OF 1911.

In the Saskatchewan election of 1917 the Conservative party, headed by Willoughby and firebrands such as Bryant, Wright and others, are endeavouring to repeat the Tory tactics so successfully carried out in the Dominion election of 1911. Surely our people have not forgotten the Reciprocity campaign. At that time the Tories decided that if they could arouse the feelings of the electorate against the United States they could win out. So they set to work. By special appeals to the British born, by the cry of annexation, by denouncing Liberal leaders as traitors, by branding the whole Liberal party as being disloyal, they finally succeeded in hoodwinking the people and reciprocity was defeated. Not because it deserved to be defeated, but because the Conservative party succeeded in fooling a great many voters who allowed their feelings to get the better of their judgment.

And so it is today. Once more the Conservative party is playing the old game. In our "Better Schools Movement" they think they see an opportunity to arouse the prejudices of many voters. By demagogic appeals they do not hesitate to play class against class, race against race, religion against religion. They care not what the effect may be on our social and community life or on our relations to each other as a people. The more discord and the less harmony and good-will the better for them. So they think. They forget, however, that our western people are not so easily stampeded. Elsewhere in Canada this sort of political game may work, but not in Saskatchewan. Our people are too sensible for that.

### PREMIER MARTIN'S STAND.

No one can question the absolute sincerity of Premier Martin regarding his desire to improve our school laws and to see that they are rigidly enforced. When he took office he at once recognised the far-reaching importance of the "Better Schools Movement." At an early date he met and conferred with the officers of the Saskatchewan Education League. He discussed the whole situation with them frankly and finally as a result of this conference it was decided that provision should be made for a thorough educational survey of the province.

The Saskatchewan Education League thoroughly recognised the importance of having a proper survey made before the Government or the Legislature attempted to tamper with our school laws. They realised the necessity for having facts and figures and a complete knowledge of conditions before reaching any decision as to what should be done to improve our schools. This view was endorsed by Premier Martin and the officials of the Education Department. The principle was also agreed to by the great Liberal Convention held at Moose Jaw. As everyone will recognise, it is quite an easy matter to suggest all sorts of possible changes in our school law and regulations but it is quite another thing to be sure that these suggested changes will be certain to improve existing conditions. Hasty action or action founded on insufficient information might easily lead to all sorts of mistakes that would cripple and weaken our whole educational system for years to come.

### PROVISION FOR SURVEY.

For the purpose of having the necessary survey made the Government has secured the services of Dr. Foght, an educational expert of the very highest rank. There is no man living on the continent of America who can do this work better than Mr. Foght. In addition, at the last session of the Legislature there was placed in the Estimates



the sum of \$10,000 to defray the costs of the survey. It will be carried on just as rapidly as possible, and if further moneys are needed to meet expenditures, they will be provided, no matter how large the sum required may be.

That Premier Martin and the Government have pursued the proper course in this regard may be gathered from the following:

### COMMENT BY THE SASKATCHEWAN PUBLIC EDUCATION LEAGUE.

#### Wanted—Temperate and Constructive Criticism.

What we require in Saskatchewan is the painstaking discovery and dispassionate dissemination of reliable information regarding the practical working of our schools and constructive suggestions regarding the improvement of the system where experience shows it to be weak. Indiscriminate fault-finding never helped anybody or anything. But 'faithful are the wounds of a friend,' said a wise old Hebrew a long time ago; and the real friends of the people's schools must candidly investigate the facts, etc."

#### Dr. Foght's Comment.

A representative of Saskatchewan Public Education League press committee met Dr. W. H. Foght on his way back to Washington from the Teachers' Convention at Prince Albert. Dr. Foght said:

"Yes, I am profoundly interested in your Saskatchewan campaign for the readjustment of your schools to actual conditions and the best modern methods. You are working out your own problem, but it is only another form of the problem now being earnestly faced by the most progressive states all over the Union."

"Then you are in sympathy with the educational survey as a preliminary to the revision of a school system, Dr. Foght? There are some folk in Saskatchewan that have been inclined to look on these new-fangled educational investigations as fads," said the reporter. That fetched him, and the expert straightened up with battle in his eye."

"Such a criticism shows an entire misapprehension of the meaning of a school survey. When practical business men are not certain as to the condition of any business enterprise they control, is not the first step the taking of an inventory of resources and liabilities? Well, that is simply a survey. In school matters a survey is the substitution of scientific investigation for unscientific guess work. It gets at the facts and makes them capable of being easily understood by the people at large and by the educational authorities

"directly concerned. It makes it possible to distinguish between  
the proposals of ill-informed critics and those of men and women who  
are really in touch with the facts."

The following is an extract from the letter sent last October to the Dominion Royal Commission by the Saskatchewan Public Education League:

"To equip our authorities with the necessary information and  
secure for them the whole-hearted support of the entire citizen body,  
it will be necessary to carry out under expert guidance educational  
and social surveys the secret of which has been learned abroad in  
the last half dozen years but not yet generally applied in the  
activities of educational commissions at least in this country. What  
is wanted is not the collection of volumes of vague opinions and  
hearsay evidence which never really reaches the public, but the  
collection and interpretation of indisputable facts as to existing  
needs and conditions and as to what has been done successfully  
elsewhere to meet problems analogous to or identical with those  
locally prevalent."

The following is a press report in connection with the mass meeting held in the Regina City Hall last June in observation of the "Better Schools Day":

"Upon motion of J. F. Bryant, the meeting declared its hearty  
endorsement of the non-partisan province-wide popular campaign  
of discussion inaugurated and approved by Premier Scott, and the  
leader of the Opposition in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly  
with a view to acquainting the whole people with the educational  
needs and conditions of this province and devising ways and means  
for the betterment of our school system."

Mr. James Balfour (now Conservative candidate for the Milestone constituency), moved a resolution calling for an educational survey of the province, which was carried unanimously.

Dr. Black said: "A systematic investigation of educational matters in this province was one thing that was needed here. Many countries had conducted educational surveys. They were the systematic attempts of applying business principles to the investigating of the educational affairs of the province. He believed the Government had wisely refrained from stating a policy, but he hoped that some steps would be taken to make a survey of actual conditions."

### **WILLOUGHBY'S WOBBLY ATTITUDE.**

On this question Mr. Willoughby has succeeded in performing his usual acrobatic tricks. After arguing that the "Better Schools Movement" should be kept out of politics he now takes the opposite view

and is attempting to make a political football of our elementary schools. Yesterday he heartily approved the idea that a thorough survey should be made of our educational conditions before attempting to find a solution to our problems. Today he brushes aside the survey and at a hole-and-corner meeting of his candidates and himself he draws up a statement of what he would do to set everything right if the people would only give him the job. By announcing his policy of school reform Mr. Willoughby in effect says that he has no confidence in the Saskatchewan Education League and he considers it unnecessary that an expert should be engaged to make a survey of our educational conditions.

Surely Mr. Willoughby must think that the people of Saskatchewan are mere children! If he does not know he should know that our educational problems are most complex and their proper solution most difficult. If he imagines for one moment that our citizens are prepared to accept the conclusions reached by himself and the forty odd party candidates who recently met in Regina, he will find he is very much mistaken. Who are these candidates that they undertake to speak with authority on educational matters? How many of them have ever given any serious thought to our school problems? And even if they have, what qualifications do they possess to enable them to find a satisfactory solution for these problems? No, it is another case of "wobbling." Nobody knows better than Mr. Willoughby himself that the proper course to pursue is to have a thorough survey made of our educational conditions and needs by a trained expert assisted by an army of workers throughout the whole province. He knows also that until this survey is completed no one can tell with any degree of accuracy what is required to place our elementary schools on a sounder basis. In order, however, to gain a little cheap political capital he and his friends abandon what they agreed to some few weeks or months ago and he now rushes before the public and proclaims himself the "Moses" who is to lead us out of the wilderness.

#### THE WILLOUGHBY EDUCATION PLATFORM.

It is worth while to take a square look at some of the policies advocated by Mr. Willoughby and a few of his party friends. In doing so it must be remembered that the reforms suggested are to be immediately made law should Mr. Willoughby by any chance succeed to the premiership. He is dead sure that he has found the remedy for all the ills that exist. So far as he is concerned no further knowledge of our conditions is required. He brushes to one side the idea of a survey. He does not look for advice or assistance from the Saskat-

chewan Education League or any of the many educational experts now employed in our many institutions. He, and he alone, on the advice of a few political friends, has discovered the cure-all for the countless evils and weaknesses which he assumes endangers our whole educational structure. Let us examine briefly a few of his suggestions. Space will not permit an exhaustive study.

**Pensions for Teachers.**—This looks attractive. At first sight it may appeal to many. What, however, does it mean? How are pensions to be provided for? How much must the teacher, the trustees, the province pay into the pension fund? How long must a teacher remain in the profession to be entitled to a pension? Three, five, ten, twenty or how many years? What classes of teachers will be entitled to pensions? If our lady teachers, after teaching a few years, get married, will they be entitled to a refund of the amounts they have paid in? Must trustees provide for the pension fund in addition to salary for the teacher? These and a hundred other questions immediately arise. At the present time is anyone certain that this is the best method or the only method of improving the status of the teacher? Is it not much wiser before arriving at a decision as to what should be done to have the opinion and advice of the teachers as well as the recommendations of those who will conduct our educational survey?

**Minimum Salaries for Teachers.**—What minimum salaries? Is there not a possibility that this might do more harm than good? For years past teachers have been very scarce. The supply is never equal to the demand. The fixing of minimum salaries might tend to drive teachers out of the profession unless salaries were placed sufficiently high. How high are they to be? Are teachers, trustees and rate-payers to be consulted? Does any real necessity exist for fixing minimum salaries so long as the supply of teachers is not greater than the demand? Is it the intention to force teachers of certain classes to accept salaries fixed by law? Surely this is another problem that should be most fully considered before a decision is reached as to what should be done.

**Extending to Rural Schools Facilities for Secondary Education.**—How in the world is this to be done? Is every rural school to be a high school? Must every rural teacher have a high school certificate? How many teachers are there to be in each rural school? Who is to pay them? By what means is it suggested that high school facilities shall be extended to rural schools? The idea may be all right, but will someone come forward and tell us in a practical, concrete way just what is intended, how the trick is to be accomplished, what it will cost and who will foot the bill?

**Public Boarding Schools.**—Another beautiful idea. But where are these to be established? Are they to be rural institutions or town



institutions! Are our ordinary schools to be turned into boarding schools! Hereafter are trustees to provide kitchens and dining rooms and dormitories! Are these public boarding schools to be owned and managed by school districts or by the province! Who is to pay for them! How are taxes to be collected! Is board to be free! Must all property be taxed to pay for the board of children attending! The public are entitled to know just what Mr. Willoughby's public boarding schools mean.

**A Change in the System of Administration Under Which the School District is the Unit of Government.**—This, if it means anything, means the abolition of all existing boards of trustees. Are we ready for the change! Are the ratepayers of the province dissatisfied with the present system! How have they shown that dissatisfaction! Has our trustee convention advocated this change! What does Mr. Willoughby propose to adopt in place of our existing system! What is the change he has in view! Does he expect the electors to approve his policy of a new system of administration without knowing what it is!

The erection of school residences, the compulsory teaching of civics and practical patriotism, a large increase in the number of inspectors, consolidation of schools and a number of other policies suggested in the Conservative platform are now part and parcel of our school law or regulations. The fact that this is so is the clearest indication that those who were responsible for drawing up the Conservative platform have little knowledge of our school system as it exists. For years provision has been made for the erection of teachers' homes and for consolidated schools. Already ten additional inspectors have been provided for. Instead, therefore, of advocating supposed new policies is it not about time Mr. Willoughby should make himself acquainted with our school law as it is!

The foregoing criticisms of the Conservative platform on education is the very clearest indication that the Conservative party is endeavouring to place the cart before the horse. Mr. Willoughby would appear in a better light if he had stuck to his guns. He should not have wobbled. He should have waited till the educational survey already provided for had been carried out. With the report of experts before him he would know exactly where he stood and he would be in a position to advocate reforms that would meet known conditions. As it is he is floundering in the dark. He is vainly grasping at straws in the hope that he may thereby save himself and his party from shipwreck.

## PROMPT ACTION BY PREMIER MARTIN.

When Premier Martin became Minister of Education he at once devoted his attention to some phases of our school problems that in his judgment required immediate action on the part of the Legislature, namely, the attendance of children at school and provision of more frequent and thorough inspections. He went into these questions thoroughly, and as a result at the last session of the House provision was made by law whereby weaknesses heretofore existing in our school system have been removed.

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Saskatchewan has now, thanks to Mr. Martin, the best school attendance law of any province in Canada. When it passed through the House last session neither Mr. Willoughby nor any of his followers had any suggestion or criticism to offer. Mr. Martin and his officials had previously made a careful survey of the attendance laws of all the provinces in Canada and of all the states in the United States, and the measure he submitted to the Legislature was as advanced and as perfect as can be found anywhere on this continent.

This new law came into effect on May 1st, 1917, and as must naturally be expected it will take a little time to get it in full operation. As to the result of our new attendance law no elector need have any doubt. The attendance of children at our schools is bound to improve. For this one act alone our new Minister of Education is deserving of the confidence and support of every elector.

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

The problem of the private school is universally admitted a difficult one. The right to establish private schools exists in every civilised country the world round. In Great Britain, France, the United States and in every province in Canada such schools exist and they are allowed to exist by law. It is very rarely that the state interferes with them in any way. This fact must not be lost sight of. For more than a century leading statesmen and leading educationists in all countries have given their fullest and best consideration to this question, with the result as stated. Here in Saskatchewan, however, there are many people who think the problem is so simple that it can be settled by a wave of the hand. These people have never really studied the question. They have looked only at the surface.

Are the people of Great Britain, the United States, Ontario and Manitoba disloyal because their school laws do not prohibit the existence of private schools? Should we compel all parents to send their children to the public school regardless of the wishes of such parents? Other countries, provinces and states do not do so. We must be sensible. Many parents desire to educate their children at home.

Some desire to send them to boarding schools. The Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Mennonite and Lutheran churches as well as others have established private schools for educating children. These schools teach elementary work as well as high school work. Those in authority prescribe the qualifications of teachers, the course of study and text books. All these institutions provide the class of education which they think is best suited for the children who attend. Should the state impose its will on all these private schools towards the support of which the state contributes not a cent? Should they be compelled by law to do exactly the same work as is done in our public schools and our high schools? It is only necessary to ask the question to realise the difficulty of the problem.

From the way some people talk one would think that our whole educational system was in danger because we have a few private schools in Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact we have no more proportionately than any other province in Canada or any state south of the boundary line. All told we have no less than 3,947 school districts. We have only about forty private schools. It will thus be seen that a very small number of our children are attending schools of this class.

#### THE MENNONITE PRIVATE SCHOOL.

There are quite a number of these in existence—probably about thirty. They are confined to settlements composed of a certain sect who conscientiously believe that their children should not attend public schools. These private schools have existed among these people ever since they came to Canada over forty years ago. It was the Conservative party at Ottawa with Sir John A. Macdonald as Premier who encouraged these people to settle in the west. Before they moved here from Russia they were given a charter of rights and liberties by the same Conservative Government. By the statute law of Canada, and by order of his Excellency the Governor General in Council, it is declared: "that the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles shall be afforded these people without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever, and the same privilege extended to the education of their children in schools."

Being a deeply religious, law abiding people, with faith in the Government of Canada, they considered this scrap of paper as sacred. Today there are many extremists who would tear it to shreds. Apparently Prussianism exists not only in Europe but here as well. No, that is not the way. Little by little these people are learning the value of an education. There is a constant breaking away from old ideals, and it is only a matter of time, and that not very long, when these schools will disappear altogether. What is needed now is not the big stick and compulsion, but rather patience and conciliation. People

who have strong religious convictions can be led but not driven. In this connection we should not forget the martyrs of old who were always ready to stand any kind of persecution and who by the hundred were burned at the stake.

### OTHER PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

We have a number of other private schools in rural communities—chiefly Lutheran and Roman Catholic. They are established for somewhat similar reasons. The parents of the children hold that our public schools are Godless schools. They maintain that their children should be surrounded with religious influences. Can they be blamed for that? Are there not thousands of parents who believe that religion should be taught in the school? With these parents it is a matter of conscience and religious conviction. That is what makes the problem so difficult. That is the reason why other governments the world round have not interfered. The question is, should the state impose its majority will on these people? Should we compel them to educate their children not as they wish but as we wish? Other provinces and other countries do not. Are they all wrong? And have they all been wrong for a hundred years? Surely all wisdom is not confined to a few excited people in Saskatchewan? These are matters worth thinking about.

### THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

As regards the duty of the state in its relation to these private schools there can be no question. This is clearly recognised by the Martin Government. The majority of the citizens of the province have a right to demand that all children living within our borders receive a satisfactory elementary education. It was the recognition of this principle that led Premier Martin to include in our new attendance law certain provisions with this definite object in view. This new Act, which came into force on May 1st, 1917, demands that every child not attending a public school shall receive an efficient elementary education at home or elsewhere. Those in authority must see to it that the children attending are being properly educated. Unless they are and complaint is made it is the duty of the Department of Education to see that the school is inspected and reported upon. If the school does not come up to a satisfactory standard the parents of all children attending such schools are liable to fines.

In making this provision at the last session of the Assembly Premier Martin showed in no uncertain way that he was prepared to deal with the problem in an effective manner. No member in the House suggested that the private schools should be abolished. On the other hand all agreed that suitable provision should be made for a proper investigation of private schools in all cases where complaint is



made of their inefficiency. As this has now been done, there remains no reasonable cause for further complaint.

### NUMBER OF INSPECTORS.

This is a matter on which there can be no two opinions. From every standpoint it is desirable that all schools should be inspected as frequently as possible. It must be remembered, however, that adequate provision for inspection costs money and that money does not grow on trees. In the fiscal year 1916-17 we had 25 inspectors for 4,300 schools, and they were paid out of the Provincial Treasury for salaries and expenses the sum of \$82,200. At the last session of the House provision was made to add ten new inspectors to the staff. It is estimated the increased annual expenditure for these inspectors will amount to \$30,000, making the total cost of inspection per annum about \$112,200.

By adding ten inspectors this year the situation will be greatly improved. Premier Martin, however, does not intend to stop there. Next year it is proposed to make a further addition to the staff, the object being to have a sufficient number of inspectors to ensure frequent visits to all schools, but more particularly to those districts where trustees and teachers need advice and assistance.

It is further to be noted that with a larger number of inspectors the Department of Education at all times will be in closer touch with the conditions existing in all school districts. The school law and regulations will be more rigidly enforced. This has been a weakness in the past, as we had too few inspectors to carry on the work. Hereafter, having smaller districts and less schools, every inspector will be able to report frequently on such important matters as the qualifications of teachers, the use of text books, the teaching of English, the attendance of children and other essentials.

The electors of the province may, therefore, regard the question of sufficient inspection as settled. As a matter of general policy in the interests of our whole educational system the Martin Government will see to it that hereafter no possible ground for complaint in this regard can arise.

### RECKLESS CRITICISMS.

During the course of the past few months a number of Conservative speakers and the whole Conservative press have been indulging in all sorts of extravagant statements respecting certain conditions which they claim exist in the schools of Saskatchewan. Were it not for the fact that many people are prone to believe these yarns no attention would be paid to them here. In order that the electors of the province may know the truth respecting some of the attacks being

made it is thought advisable to refer to a few of those now going the rounds. Those mentioned are merely samples of the gross misrepresentation that is taking place.

### AUSTRIAN TEXT BOOKS.

The statement has been made and is being made over and over again that Austrian text books are in use in the schools of the province and that their use is permitted by the Government. One brilliant speaker at a banquet recently held at Saskatoon, actually held up for public gaze a copy of these dreadful books. He forgot, however, to mention where he obtained it. He had no evidence to submit that the book in question was ever inside any school. He was simply "fooling" his audience and playing the part of a demagogue. What are the facts?

There are no Austrian books authorised for use in any school in Saskatchewan. More than that, no such books are permitted to be used in any school. Since this lie was first started many months ago the Department of Education has endeavoured in every possible way to secure evidence of the use of any such book in any school, and so far have failed absolutely in doing so. Time and time again Conservatives have been challenged to produce any such evidence—but no, they are quite content to continue to spread the poison, knowing that the story is made out of whole cloth. They hope thereby to arouse the prejudices of certain sections in the community against the Government. In this they are doomed to failure, as the public can always be relied upon to do the right thing when it knows the truth.

It may be that in some school somewhere in the province at some time a child who formerly lived in Austria took one of these books to school. The same thing might happen in the case of a child who formerly lived in the United States, Ontario, France, Sweden or Manitoba. The Department of Education cannot keep an officer in every school every day to see that no child brings into the school an unauthorised book. Even our teachers would have difficulty in preventing this. But to say that such books are authorised and that the department permitted their use is a "falsehood" pure and simple. And more than that, Conservative speakers know that such is the case.

### AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM.

The following statements, taken from the press, show the lengths to which opponents of the Government will go to stir up racial feeling:

"By singing the national anthems of Austria and Germany in the schools they are developing disloyalty in the rising generation."

The German and Austrian national anthems have taken the place in many schools of 'God Save the King' and the 'Maple Leaf Forever'.

It will be noted that in these statements absolutely no mention is made of the school in which the alleged offence took place. The person who started this false rumour knew that he would be caught if he attempted to name the offending teacher or school. So he merely started the yarn in the hope that every Tory newspaper from the Atlantic to the Pacific would sing the song of the dreadful condition of affairs permitted by the Martin Government in its schools. This slanderous statement, like the other, has no foundation in fact. In all our schools throughout the province—whether in English-speaking or foreign-speaking settlements—the Union Jack is to be found and the children are taught and frequently sing our own national anthem and other patriotic songs.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE TAUGHT.

Our school law provides that the English language shall be taught in every school and that it shall be the medium for giving instruction to all children attending. There can be no exception. Any school not living up to this law is not entitled to any grant, and the trustees are liable to a fine for allowing the school to be conducted contrary to law.

In the face of this plain statement of facts the Conservative press and Conservative speakers during recent months keep on referring to certain schools in which the English language is not taught or used. They endeavour to lead gullible to believe that there are scores of schools in which English has no place and that the foreign-born children attending do not know a word of the English tongue. If they did their plain duty they would at once notify the Minister of Education if they have any actual knowledge of any such school. But no, they prefer to talk in a vague general way of such conditions existing, and they refuse absolutely to name the schools where the law in this regard is alleged to be violated.

Now, what are the actual facts? Every inspector knows that it is his duty to enforce the law in this regard. He is constantly on the lookout for any infractions. If by any means a teacher has secured employment in a school who cannot speak and teach English, it is the duty of the inspector to at once report the matter to the Department and the Department invariably insists that a qualified teacher be secured. In the past there may have been occasional instances where, owing to the great scarcity of teachers, unqualified persons for short periods were in charge of a few schools, but to say that a general condition such as this existed and that the Department wilfully permitted it is a gross libel on the officials of the Department and the staff of inspectors.

## TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

Our school law and regulations provide that the trustees of any district may provide for the teaching of any foreign language after three o'clock in the afternoon. This law has been on our statute books for many years. It was not put there by the Martin Government or the Scott Government. It was enacted by the Territorial Government when Hon. F. W. G. Haultain (our present Chief Justice), a Conservative in politics, was Premier and Minister of Education. Until quite recently no serious objection was taken by anybody to the law. But recently, owing chiefly to war conditions, there are certain elements in the community clamouring for schools in which nothing shall be taught but the English language. As a consequence the question is becoming more or less a political issue.

Looking at the situation broadly, is a child any worse off because he happens to have a knowledge of two languages? What harm does it do to him? Can parents be blamed if they wish their children to know the mother tongue? Is not this the most natural thing in the world? Should we by law endeavour to compel all our people to speak one language and one language only? Does Great Britain carry out such policy in India, in Egypt, in South Africa or in any of her other colonies? No, this is not the British way. She does not use compulsion. Liberty, conciliation and compromise on questions of policy of this nature have always characterised British rule.

And so it is in Saskatchewan. We are living in a country where the English language is and will continue to be the dominant language. It is, therefore, essential that every child should have a knowledge of this language. For this reason the law provides that every school shall be taught in English and that every teacher shall be qualified to teach English. More than that such instruction in English must be given from 9 o'clock a.m. till 3 o'clock p.m. With this law in existence is there any danger that our children of all nationalities will not learn English? None whatever. As a matter of fact, as everyone knows, we have thousands upon thousands of these foreign-born children who now speak English just as well as our own children. This being the case, what possible harm can be done by permitting them to acquire some knowledge of their mother tongue? People are apt to look at this question from an extreme point of view, whereas a little thoughtful consideration should lead most of us to see the problem in an entirely different light. As a matter of fact, there is an exceedingly small percentage (less than 5%) of our schools which take advantage of the provisions regarding the teaching of foreign languages in our schools.